United Nations E/C.19/2005/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 March 2005
English
Original: Spanish

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fourth session
New York, 16-27 May 2005
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Information received from Governments

Note by the Secretariat

In its report on its third session, held in May 2004, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues identified proposals, objectives, recommendations and areas of possible future action and, through the Economic and Social Council, recommended that States, the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations assist in their realization. Information received in this regard from Governments is contained in the present document and its addenda.

* E/C.19/2005/1.

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Mexico

Report on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its third session

Summary

This report covers the activities initiated by the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Populations during 2004 in the various areas falling within its purview. Particular emphasis is given to activities and campaigns conducted by the Office for the Coordination of Special Programmes and Projects. The report serves to highlight and to follow up on the recommendations made during the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held in New York from 10 to 21 May 2004, the key theme of which was "Indigenous women".

It should be recalled that at the third session of the Permanent Forum the Government of Mexico through the Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented a report entitled "The Question of Indigenous Women in Mexico" and reported on the Commission's programmes and activities to benefit that sector of the indigenous population.

The format of this report corresponds to the Permanent Forum's mandated areas (human rights, education, culture, economic and social development, environment and health) and deals solely with the aspects covered by the Commission's activities to benefit indigenous women.

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I. Human rights

1. During the period covered by the present report, the Commission, through the Bureau for Building the Capacity of Indigenous People (DFCI) and the Office for the Coordination of Special Programmes and Projects, initiated the following projects and activities for promoting indigenous women's human rights:

A. The project, "Different voices and discordant voices: indigenous women's perspectives and proposals regarding traditional normative frameworks, gender, practices and customs"

2. The objectives of the project are to:

- Initiate activities to promote and foster respect for the human rights of indigenous women as a strategy to strengthen their position and status within their families, communities and organizations, as well as in national institutions and society, in order to facilitate the development of equitable relationships that should serve as the basis of a culture of rights;
- Conduct an analysis by ethnic group of the day-to-day situation of indigenous women in Mexico, with their participation;
- Train an inter-ethnic working group of indigenous women to promote, from their respective cultural viewpoints, the recognition and defence of their human, cultural and gender rights, beginning with an activity to advance and publicize indigenous women's rights;
- Contribute to an assessment of the effective exercise of indigenous rights and the changes that should be made in that regard, from the women's perspective;
- Help to lay the groundwork for public policies regarding the promotion of and respect for the rights of indigenous women, in the framework of respect for their cultural diversity and autonomy;
- Promote the generation, integration and dissemination of knowledge and information with a gender and a multicultural perspective.

3. Project activities are directed at training indigenous women with leadership skills and experience to become community advocates for indigenous women's rights. In activities conducted during two work cycles, 25 community advocates for indigenous women's rights were trained from the Nahua, Mixtec, Purepecha, Otomi and Mazahua peoples in the states of Puebla, Veracruz, Guerrero, Michoacán, México, Querétaro, Guanajuato and Hidalgo.

4. The results were as follows:

- Training of an inter-ethnic group of indigenous women as community advocates and defenders of the human rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women;
- Community assessment of the human rights situation of indigenous women in their municipalities and communities;
- Integration of a view of the status of women's rights into their traditional normative frameworks;

- Documentation of the main types of violations of the human rights of indigenous women within the family and the community, in particular: structural violence directed at them; gender discrimination; lack of access to property; lack of access to economic resources; lack of opportunities for participation in decision-making; discrimination in matters of inheritance; dispossession of property and abandonment of children; sexual violence; unequal opportunities for participation in politics and decision-making.

5. The project specifically builds leadership skills and the capacity to advocate for the human and customary rights of women within indigenous communities, beginning with the training of community advocates in areas related to human, indigenous, cultural and gender rights. The purpose is to help them to build the skills that they need to confront discriminatory practices and to achieve full exercise of their rights. In addition, the project was developed in response to repeated requests from indigenous women for a review of the patterns of their peoples' practices and customs, with a view to making their own proposal regarding which ones it would be in their interest to change and which ones to retain. It is expected that this project will be continued.

B. The project, "Equality in Indigenous Boarding Schools in Yucatán and Sinaloa"

6. The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Develop a specific methodology and appropriate educational material to deal with the topic of the rights of indigenous children, with particular emphasis on the rights of girls;
- Promote opportunities for reflection and dialogue among indigenous boys and girls, where the problems that they face in both family and community life may be analysed and where they are provided with information about their rights.

7. The results were as follows:

Project activities consisted of five workshops of two days each for boys and girls of the indigenous Mayan people of Yucatán and Mayos of Sinaloa, as well as non-indigenous pupils from primary grades 1 to 6 attending indigenous boarding schools. Workshops for parents were conducted in Yalcoba, Catmis, Citincabchen, Kinil and Tiholop in the state of Yucatán, and four more were conducted in the state of Sinaloa. A total of 434 persons participated: 237 women and girls and 197 men and boys.

- The specific methodology and educational materials for dealing with the topic of the rights of indigenous boys and girls were tested;
- Greater dissemination of information was achieved regarding boys' and girls' rights and obligations;
- There was a transfer of support so that indigenous boys and girls could better defend and promote their rights in their places of origin.

Other activities

8. As part of efforts to protect and publicize indigenous women's rights, four presentations to promote the book, *Diagnóstico de la Discriminación hacia las Mujeres Indígenas* [Assessment of discrimination against indigenous women], published by the Commission in 2004, were given in Mexico City, D.F.; Morelia, Michoacán; Chihuahua, Chihuahua; and Mérida, Yucatán.

- In connection with International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women five regional forums were held in Cuetzalan, Puebla; Chalchihuitán, Chiapas; San Mateo del Mar and Matías Romero, Oaxaca; and Ometepec, Guerrero. In addition, the Indigenous Cultural Radio Stations System broadcast "Pláticas de Doña Lupe", programmes dedicated to publicizing and protecting reproductive rights;
- Under the project, "Third-tier organization", support was provided by the Bureau for Building the Capacity of Indigenous People for two activities initiated by indigenous women's organizations:
  - (a) Gender and the indigenous woman: concept-building workshops with Mazahua and Otomí women from the state of Querétaro (Yax'Kin Human Rights Centre). The objective of the activity is to identify the components of gender identity and gender stereotyping;
  - (b) Workshop on indigenous women's rights in Mixteca. The purpose of this workshop is to build a team of women who are familiar with the rights of indigenous peoples and communities and can act as community advocates and defenders for them.

II. Education

9. In the area of education, the national Commission for the Development of Indigenous Populations has initiated a number of activities aimed at narrowing the gulf between the national and indigenous populations in terms of educational access, retention, achievement and performance. Even the more broadly based activities aim at promoting enrolment and retention of indigenous girls in the educational system and meeting the literacy and training needs of the adult female indigenous population. To that end, a project was launched entitled "Support for the educational development of indigenous youth".

10. The aim of this project is to provide financial support and organize follow-up activities for indigenous students in higher education in order to help to offset the disadvantages resulting from marginalization, exclusion and discrimination and to realize indigenous people's right to education. The project aims to support indigenous students in the higher education system.

11. Project activities have been conducted in 22 of the country's states with institutional representation and in the Federal District. For the project's operation in the various states, funds have been allocated to the 22 state-level offices of the Commission and their corresponding operational units. The project provides a total of 370 scholarships, of which 53 per cent have been granted to men (196 scholarships) and 47 per cent to women (174 scholarships).

III. Culture

12. In the area of culture, during the period covered by this report, the Commission conducted the following activities specifically aimed at promoting, recognizing and enhancing appreciation for the role of women in preserving, transmitting and creating indigenous cultures:

A. Festival of Creative Women

13. For the fourth consecutive year, on the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), the Commission held this festival in the city of Chihuahua, Chihuahua, in conjunction with the Department for Popular and Indigenous Cultures of the National Council on Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA), with the participation of creative women in the fields of poetry, music, literature, painting, photography, video, radio, singing, crafts and traditional medicine. The purpose of the festival is, firstly, to provide a space for the living expression of indigenous cultures through the voices of women and, secondly, to show the rest of Mexican society a little-known facet of the country's multicultural wealth. The festival will be held again in March 2005, in the city of San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí.

B. Festival of the Shawl

14. One of the cultural activities promoted by the Commission is the Festival of the Shawl (*Festival del Rebozo*), which was held in September 2004. Participants included indigenous female weavers from the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, Yucatán, Michoacán, Chiapas, México, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí, who took part in a combined exhibition and sale event. On that occasion, the Commission also organized an exhibition of shawls at the National Museum of Popular Culture. It will be shown again on the same dates in 2005.

C. Seminar on the theme, "Crafts as cultural production and the role of indigenous women in this activity"

15. In November 2004, the Bureau for Building the Capacity of Indigenous People organized a seminar entitled "Crafts as cultural production and the role of indigenous women in this activity". The seminar was aimed at operational personnel of federal Government and the Veracruz state government agencies in charge of projects and programmes designed to promote craft production. The seminar was held in the city of Xalapa, Veracruz, with the participation of 43 persons from six institutions and with specialist speakers from four academic and government bodies. It has been proposed that this seminar should be repeated in 2005 in Veracruz and that it should also be held in the states of Hidalgo, Michoacán and Puebla.

IV. Economic and social development

16. In order to meet the economic development needs of indigenous women and give them better access to productive, technological, financial and training resources, the Commission is running two programmes which also involve training

and teaching activities designed to make optimal use of the resources provided by the federal Government and promote ownership of productive processes by the indigenous women targeted by the programmes. All these activities are part of the Commission's ongoing efforts in that area.

A. Indigenous Women's Productive Organization Programme

17. The goal of the Indigenous Women's Productive Organization Programme (POPMI) is to help to improve the living conditions and social status of indigenous women, strengthening their involvement as the promoters of their own development through the implementation of productive organization projects with a perspective of equity, gender, sustainability, multiculturalism and human rights.

18. In 2004, by subsidizing indigenous women's microenterprise activities, the programme supported projects in the following states: Baja California, Campeche, Chiapas, Colima, Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, México, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Yucatán.

19. The special feature of the Programme is that it provides financial support and follow-up to groups of indigenous women who have a low organizational profile and little economic output and who receive little or no institutional attention, in order to begin a process of organizational consolidation in the economic field, strengthening the groups and their projects until they are in a position to receive other types of support involving greater commitments, such as revolving loans and other credits. The Programme focuses on regions which receive little institutional attention and are highly marginalized.

B. POPMI training programme for indigenous women community outreach workers

20. The objectives of the programme are to:

- Promote the training of human resources in the community, so that in the regions and communities eligible for the Indigenous Women's Productive Organization Programme, the target population group has the necessary management, dissemination, support and association skills to achieve improved access to institutional services.
- Include in the POPMI operational structure the training of indigenous human resources which will know the programme, its operational structures and its requirements.

21. The programme activities are designed for indigenous women community outreach workers who take part in this project, as well as institutional personnel involved in POPMI. The activities have been conducted in 23 of the country's states with institutional representation and in the Federal District.

22. The results were as follows:

- Training of institutional personnel in the implementation of POPMI;

- Refresher training for institutional personnel in certain key national Commission topics and in active inter-agency coordination;
- Enhanced awareness among operational personnel in the programme of the need to work closely with community outreach workers and of the difficulties facing those workers, and women in general;
- Enhanced awareness of the need to change attitudes in working with indigenous women and the importance of being available to the women's groups and working closely with them;
- Adequate amount of training, coordination and follow-up;
- Networking and coordination between civil society organizations and Government agencies, so that civil society organizations can contribute their knowledge and experience in working with indigenous women from a gender equity perspective;
- Local recognition of work done in social promotion for economic development;
- Training of 156 indigenous women community outreach workers in the states of Chiapas, México, Yucatán, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Guerrero, Veracruz, Oaxaca and Durango;
- Inter-agency coordination between the different areas involved in implementing the programme at the national, state and regional levels;
- A process of constant, ongoing, intensive training for indigenous women community workers and institutional personnel;
- Promotion of a training process for the community workers, to give them a professional outlook on economic development work with indigenous women, from a gender perspective;
- Participation by state and municipal agencies in meeting the needs of indigenous women;
- Creation of opportunities for participation, professionalization and income generation for indigenous women living in their areas of origin.

C. Regional Indigenous Funds Programme

23. The objective of the Regional Indigenous Funds Programme is to promote the economic and social development of indigenous groups and communities, with due care for natural resources and their environment, their cultures and their rights, by strengthening the funds as financing agencies of a social nature, operated and managed by indigenous community organizations based on the principle of equity.

24. The Commission is supporting the development of 240 mixed regional indigenous funds, incorporating organizations of indigenous producers of both genders and providing loans, technical assistance and marketing support. Of particular note in this area is the existence of 30 women's regional funds.

25. This support system is not only financial; it also promotes organization at the regional level, so that indigenous groups can be provided with more opportunities

and a firmer basis for their dealings and interactions with government agencies at various levels, and to ensure that they have greater influence in defining development priorities and programmes at the regional level.

D. Training project for regional indigenous women's funds

26. The objective of the training project for regional indigenous women's funds is to develop a system of training in the short, medium and long term that will help to strengthen the regional funds and promote the consolidation of organizational and empowerment processes, by developing indigenous women leaders, training management teams and establishing networks at the local, regional, state and national levels.

27. The regional funds assisted during the period covered by this report are those in the states of Puebla, Guerrero, México and Morelos and the Federal District. In these areas, training was seen as a major factor in strengthening the funds.

28. Some 140 women took part in the project, representing the Mazahua, Náhuatl, Otomí, Zapotec, Tzotzil, Popoluca, Mixtec and Totonaco indigenous groups.

29. The results were as follows:

- Training in subject areas chosen based on the results of an analysis from a gender and ethnic perspective;
- Participation by the 24 state offices of the Commission in coordination with women's regional funds;
- Skills development among women leaders of funds and organizational strengthening of their regional funds;
- Conclusion of the process with results which ensured its continuity;
- Sharing of experience among women's regional funds;
- Women's ownership of their own regional funds.

E. Sectoral strengthening project for indigenous craftswomen

30. The objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of organized groups of indigenous craftswomen as an economic sector, to participate in economic and managerial activities with a view to increasing opportunities for the distribution, financing, management and marketing of their products at the local, regional, national and international levels through training, promotion and organizational assessment activities.

31. The project activities focus on the organized groups of indigenous craftswomen served by the Commission's special programmes as well as groups identified by federal or state agencies involved in the promotion of traditional craft activities. The project activities have been carried out in seven states with institutional representation and in the Federal District.

32. The results are as follows:

- Six state assessments on the situation of organizations of indigenous craftswomen in the areas of production, marketing and organization;
- Six training courses for representatives of organizations of indigenous craftswomen from the Nahua, Popoluca, Mixtec, Zapotec, Chinantec, Tzotzil, Tojolabal, Tzeltal, Totonaco and Purépecha peoples;
- Three regional assessments: with Amuzga women in Ometepec, Guerrero; with Purépecha craftswomen in San Lorenzo, Michoacán; and with Mixtec craftswomen in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca;
- Activities carried out with indigenous craftswomen to strengthen organizational capacities and state-level inter-agency activities focusing on the issues surrounding the traditional craft industry;
- Compilation and presentation of the results of the various assessments.

F. Technical craft training under the Craft Design Programme

33. As part of the support activities for indigenous craftswomen, a skills-training course, designed for the most well-established groups of craftswomen identified in the state assessments, was initiated in order to improve their products and marketing strategies.

34. The objective of the Craft Design Programme is to promote and enhance skills-training that fosters the development of the capacities of craftswomen's organizations to improve their production and marketing methods at the same time that they rediscover their identity through an inter-agency coordination project.

35. The project activities are carried out on the basis of a cooperation agreement with the Department for Popular and Indigenous Cultures of the National Council on Arts and Culture, under which $650,000 was allocated to two priority activities:

- Continue working with the groups that took part in the 2003 course, in order to consolidate technical, production and marketing processes;
- Provide technical and production skills-training to indigenous craftswomen's organizations, in particular to those organizations proposed by the state offices of the Commission based on the results of an initial survey.

36. The results are as follows:

- Training was given to five groups of women in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Veracruz and Hidalgo. Three stages were involved: (a) doing the initial survey; (b) applying the assessment; and (c) conducting the training course in craft design;
- As a result of the training course, better quality traditional items were produced;
- Products that combined cultural, aesthetic and functional elements with the commercial elements of graphic design and packaging were developed;
- The products were distributed and presented;
- Markets were opened up for a number of products.

G. Meeting of indigenous women producers

37. The objective of this meeting of indigenous women producers is to create a forum for reflection, dialogue and the exchange of indigenous women's experiences as producers in local economies with a view to promoting coordinated institutional action.

38. The results for the reporting period are as follows:

- Over 500 indigenous women producers were invited to a public meeting concerning their participation and role in the economic development of their villages and communities;
- During working group sessions, participants identified the needs of indigenous women producers in the agricultural, live stock-rearing, service and traditional craft sectors in the areas of financing, marketing support and training;
- The meeting has been established as an annual event, as a way of promoting direct interaction between indigenous women producers and the institutions responsible for assisting them.

39. Under the project on third-tier organizations of the Bureau for Building the Capacity of Indigenous People, support was also given to the following activities, on the initiative and at the request of indigenous women's organizations:

(a) National meeting of indigenous rural and peasant women outreach workers: towards the creation of a rural development agenda with a gender perspective in Mexico (Network of Rural and Indigenous Women Outreach Workers — Na'axwin). The objective of the meeting is to encourage rural and indigenous women to participate in civil society forums and social movements so that their demands can be reflected in the national agenda.

(b) National seminar on value networks and logical management for rural development: an equitable perspective (Network of Women's Associations (AMOR)). The objective of the seminar is to facilitate the active and equal participation of rural indigenous women in profitable and sustainable economic activities at various organizational levels of rural microenterprises.

V. Environment

40. In 2003, two projects aimed at indigenous women were launched that specifically addressed the issue of the environment. The first was an assessment of the status of ecotourism projects set up by indigenous women in order to determine their specific support needs; the second involved training in the use of alternative solar technology to purify drinking water in the home. In 2005, these initiatives will be revisited in order to expand upon them and assess their results.

41. In that respect, attention is drawn to the following activity: institutional strengthening through training on water purification for indigenous homes with a gender perspective.

42. The objective of the activity is to help strengthen the institutional capacity of the Commission in the management and control of natural resources from a gender and sustainability perspective.

VI. Health

43. With regard to health, attention is drawn to the following project: indigenous women's health centres.

44. The objective of this project is to promote an intercultural model for the relationship between community health resources and local health-care providers that strengthens the capacity of the indigenous population to promote health and sexual and reproductive rights, prevent violence in the community and interact with health and justice departments in order to foster the establishment of a framework of rights and equity in indigenous regions.

45. The project is aimed at organizations of midwives and/or women health outreach workers at the microregional, local and community levels. Indigenous women in the regions served by each health centre also benefit indirectly from the project as they have access to services in the areas of reproductive health and domestic violence.

46. Under the project five health centres have been set up in four states. The centres promote reproductive rights, provide reproductive health care (particularly mother and child health, family planning, pregnancy, childbirth, the post-partum period and maternal mortality) and detect, prevent and address cases of domestic violence.

47. The health centres carry out promotional, training and dissemination activities and case referral within the regions they serve. They also gather information and documentation on the prevailing situation in their respective municipalities. This project, carried out through inter-agency coordination and supported by the Ministry of Health, has yielded the following main results:

- Organizations of indigenous midwives and female health outreach workers have taken on the role within their communities and with the local and health authorities as spokeswomen on issues that particularly affect the rights and welfare of indigenous women;
- The promotion of reproductive rights has contributed to women's health and their safety from violence and to the development of processes tending to empower indigenous women in their areas of influence;
- Linkages have been established between the centres and the health and justice sectors in their regions;
- Violence has come to be seen as a public health issue, and specific cases have been dealt with;
- Direct reproductive health care has been provided to indigenous women in highly marginalized areas;
- A model for dealing with domestic violence has been developed, and its feasibility has been demonstrated in a wide range of settings and groups;
- Indigenous midwives and health outreach workers have assured positions in their own communities, enabling them to solve problems relating to reproductive health and domestic violence;

- Midwives and outreach workers have received training in priority areas of their work, such as recognizing risks to pregnancy, early detection of cervical cancer, management and links with the institutions related to their work;
- Inputs for the detection of gender-based violence have been provided that can be reproduced and shared with female beneficiaries in their communities and regions.